

Catalog of United States Perfins. The World Catalog is quite visible, as sections periodically appear in *The Perfins Bulletin*. The US Catalog project is also progressing, although you have not seen the results. Progress seems slow at times, although the work more than keeps your editor busy. If I had only known before I took the job!

The new Catalog will have a somewhat different format from the 1978 Catalog edited by the Baloughs. It is similar to that used for the Additions and Corrections Pages (A&C) #6, in that both the letter heights and letter pin counts will be listed. An example of the format is given below.

C272 CPC D PC * C.P. Curran Printing Company
6; 8-11-8 Saint Louis, MO

In the second line, the first number lists the heights of the letters, which in this case are all 6mm. The second group of numbers, after the semicolon, give the number of pins in each letter, not counting any punctuation. The rest of the format should be clear.

One of the problems facing the Catalog Editor is the tug-of-war between simplicity and accuracy. The most frequent complaint that I have received from collectors, and especially from beginners, is that there are too many "fly-speck" patterns which are all too difficult to determine from very similar patterns. This is one of the most difficult tasks I set myself on starting work on the new Catalog, to try to eliminate as many confusing patterns as possible without eliminating legitimate patterns. The A&C pages have entered hundreds of new patterns into the Catalog. Most of these are only small variations from patterns already in the Catalog. Some of them are probably only die varieties (i.e., variations in multiple dies on a machine), and these should not be listed. Others are certain to be from different machines, either replacing earlier machines or for use in different offices. How is the poor Catalog Editor to tell?

I have spent many hours poring over my and other collections, looking for examples to determine periods of use for similar patterns. If one pattern is found only on the 1908 issue while the other is found on the 1914 issue and later, for example, it is quite probable that the latter pattern replaced the former. If the two appear on the same issues, it is likely that they are die variations. In the absence of multiples which can prove the situation this seems

The Lot of a Catalog Editor

John Randall

As most Perfin Club members are aware, the Club is currently undertaking two huge projects, *The World Perfin Catalog* and a new edition of *The*

to be a reasonable solution. Surprisingly, by this method a good case can be made for the majority of the recent patterns to be from different machines. Probably a lot of companies bought single die machines in the early days of perfinning. They liked the idea but not the slowness and replaced them with larger machines for better economy. In these cases, probably the same manufacturer was instructed to use the same pattern for the new machine, but the result was not exactly the same.

Of course, without further information it cannot even be proved that two similar patterns were used by the same company. This brings up the important point that all the past identifications of patterns are useless where a new very similar pattern has been recognized. All these patterns will have to be re-identified with covers, determining which of the two similar patterns is on each cover. So this seems as good a time as any to make the plea to all to examine your covers for those patterns for which new, similar pattern has appeared in the A&C pages. Examine it carefully to determine which pattern is on the cover. Please relay this information to the Editor. Better yet, send the cover or a good photocopy, where the pattern can be seen. All the relevant patterns should be re-identified before the new Catalog appears.

The new Catalog will have a number of features which hopefully will be helpful to all collectors, but especially to beginners. There will be sections on how to identify confusing patterns or patterns which can be read equally well forwards or backward, on using the nomenclature of the Catalog, and on how to find patterns which may have been moved to another place in the Catalog. In an attempt to facilitate the use of the Appendix, the Appendix for each letter will immediately follow that letter in the Catalog. The entire Appendix appears at the end of the Catalog in the current edition. As part of each Appendix there will be a page explaining the reason any pattern number was eliminated from the Catalog, whether it be deletion of the pattern or just a renumbering of that pattern to improve consistency in Catalog listings.

There will be three new listing categories. One is for personal or philatelic patterns, which will carry a "P" following the Catalog number. The other two are for patterns which were not supposed to be listed in previous Catalogs, although many were. Illegal size patterns are now being listed if, in the opinion of the Editorial staff, they were used to

perfin postage stamps on a non-philatelic basis and on a fairly wide scale and basically look like perfins. An example is the AMERICAN APPRAISAL pattern, which was made for revenue use, but which was used extensively to perforate postage stamps in the 1930's. It will receive the number A186I. The "I" signifies the illegal size of the pattern. The last of these categories is that of patterns which were deliberately altered to form a new pattern. Previously, the altered patterns were considered to be partials of the parent pattern. Now if it can be reasonably ascertained that the alteration was carried out deliberately and was not just the result of broken pins, the altered machine will have a separate pattern number. This pattern number will have the letter "R" after the pattern number. An example of this is pattern A44, which was deleted in an A&C as a partial of pattern A195. It has been shown that this was a deliberate alteration as the machine passed from one bank to its successor. As such, it will be reinstated as A44R.

I am sure that there will be some disagreement among the members over various aspects of the new Catalog. I will always be happy to discuss any point with you, but hopefully most members will like the new format and the new sections and information. The whole project is very time consuming and challenging, but the challenge is part of the fun. Fortunately, I have a number of great people working with me on the project including Dick Mewhinney, John Lyding, Paul Mistretta, and Sal Guarini. They make the job easier and keep me from making too many mistakes.